

Credit card holders soon will benefit from new consumer protections, as the Federal Reserve has issued the [final regulations](#) for the [law](#) aimed at ending unfair practices of the credit card industry. Credit card companies currently are prohibited from arbitrarily increasing interest rates and from double cycle billing, when companies charge interest on debt paid on time during a grace period. They now also must provide advanced written notice to consumers of any increases in the interest rate or other significant changes to the terms of an account, providing consumers the right to cancel the card before the changes go into effect.

Beginning on August 22, you will have protection against unreasonable penalty fees, a clear explanation of rate increases, and a requirement that credit card companies review and justify rate increases. The new rules also provide important protections when you purchase or use [gift cards](#), including limits on fees and expiration dates.

Protecting Medicare Services

Yesterday, I voted to prevent a 21 percent cut in Medicare payments to doctors and instead increase physician payments by 2.2 percent for six months. The Central New Jersey physicians I've talked with were rightly concerned about payment cuts and the patients I've talked with were rightly concerned about a resultant reduction in services. This action – which I expect President Obama to sign soon - protects Medicare and the services on which our seniors rely.

Yet, I am frustrated by these continuing short-term extensions. I am disappointed by the delay in passing this current extension, which members of the minority in the Senate had filibustered for the past month. I will continue to fight to replace the broken payment formula with a system that fairly compensates physicians for treating Medicare patients.

Free Museum Admission for Military Families

This summer, the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, and over 750 museums across the country have partnered to create Blue Star Museums, a program offering free museum admission to military personnel and their families through Labor Day. Many terrific museums in Central New Jersey are participating, including the Old Barracks Museum, the Princeton University Art Museum, and the Monmouth Museum. For more information, click [here](#).

Reminder: Telephone Town Hall on Tuesday, June 29

I hope you can join my 1-hour telephone town hall on Tuesday, June 29 at 7:20 p.m. To join the call, please sign up on [my website](#) , and you will receive a call on the 29th. If you are unable to participate at that time, you will be able to hear a recording of the town hall on my website, and of course you can contact me at any time with any concerns or questions.